

# Westwinds seeks new skipper

Duxbury institution on the market

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During its 64-year history, the Westwinds Bookshop has had three locations and eight owners. Now it may be moving on to its ninth.

Chris Haraden quietly posted a notice on the Web site of the New England Independent Booksellers Association that he and his wife Marilyn were "reluctantly" putting the store up for sale.

It's not a financial decision. Westwinds is still a viable business, Haraden said, but it's one that takes time they can no longer devote.

For Chris Haraden, the shop has always been a second job. He also serves as editor of the *Hull Times*. Meanwhile, Marilyn Haraden, Chris said, is caring for her father, and their kids are getting older. "There's a lot of time commitments," he said. "We love what we do," but he feels the time needed to run the store and adapt to a changing business just isn't there for them anymore.

Selling the store is not definite, he said. The only notice they've posted that they're looking for a buyer is the one on the NEBA Web site.

"We're not desperate," he said. At this point, they're just

trying to see if someone is willing to take the store over. He's also talked to other booksellers to gauge their interest.

"Believe it or not, people are still interested" in owning a bookstore, Haraden said.

"In our minds, we've come to the decision that if someone does come forward, we'd sell it." But if not, he said they would find a way to make it work.

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Chris Haraden

That's one thing he's adamant about. Regardless of who owns Westwinds, it's not going anywhere.

Westwinds has become a Duxbury institution, so much that Haraden notes that after nearly five years operating it some people still regard him as the new owner.

The Haradens have main-

tained the long-time Westwinds tradition of book signings and community involvement with events at such places as the Duxbury Free Library.

"One of the things that's unique about Duxbury is we have such a base of loyal customers," Haraden said. "They can shop elsewhere, but they don't."

Running a small independent bookstore isn't an easy task these days, Haraden admitted. Between big box mall stores like Borders and new technologies like the Amazon's Kindle, small independent stores have to work to find their niche. Part of that, he said, is customer service and education. Among the assets listed on the NEBA Web site are "long-established employees" who "have built a rapport with customers."

It's also keeping up with the times. He plans on offering e-books on the store's Web site, and a good portion of the space is now devoted to cards and gifts. Another boost to business was the opening of Foodie's across the street, which he said increased foot traffic into the store.

"It was a hard decision to make," Haraden said of the decision to put the store on the market.



STAFF PHOTO/MATTHEW NADLER

Westwinds Bookshop, in business since 1946, offers customers a wide option of reading material. The store's current owners are looking to sell the business.